

Article

Estimate of the situation

The European Giant; dwarfed in Syria

Analysis and research unit

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Syrian Center for statistics and research

March 2018

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المركز السوري للإحصاء و البحوث
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What distinguishes the European role from the roles of the rest of players in Syria is its poor policies despite the big capacities; the European Union consists of 28 states, with a total population of over 500 million people (2010 stats); it extends over four million square kilometers of land, and has the largest budget in the world (USD 18.63 trillion in 2014; that is a quarter of the money in the world); the EU also has two permanent seats at the Security Council. This super giant – with all its combat, defense, diplomatic, financial and administrative capacities – is confused against what to do in Syria. The only thing the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, could say about the Ghouta holocaust is to call for safe corridors to evacuate the wounded and those willing to survive.

As for those caught in the siege, their state is speaking for itself that the mountain gave birth to a mouse. That is the call for opening corridors has not come from a spokesperson of a local NGO in a Latin American country, but from the president of a superpower that once was controlling the whole of Syria for two decades. The same stance was taken also in the case of Aleppo.



Loss of direction

In Brussels, the capital of the EU, as a spokesman of the European Commission, Michael Docherty spoke of millions of Euros, in his statement about the size of the European intervention. The amounts were spent in emergency responses to improve the living conditions and support refugees and empowering women.

But a question from a female Syrian activist about the nature of procedures taken by the EU to sue those responsible for the death of tens of European citizens in Syria, whether in shelling or in incarceration and under torture, in reference to the secret security facilities of the Assad regime, stripped the European stance and showed its naked reality of non-action towards the required political and judicial support.

Here the enthusiastic tone that was present when talking about budgets and figures calmed down, and the answer came as a mixture of hopes and guesses; but the real meaning was *nothing*.

In fact, it was a successful answer despite the awkward situation. The fact that Docherty could not say to the activist is that the Giant has fought tyranny and supported freedom in its own way: it reduced the blacklist of the Syrian regime men not allowed to enter Europe; mitigated the economic sanctions, and lifted the ban on the assets of Tehran that is suffering because of its war budget.

Add to that reactivating diplomatic relations – partially though – with Damascus, as did Berlin for example, and other fluctuations that indicate clearly the loss of direction at the side of the European giant due to the blurred vision or lack thereof.

Well, let's say, without equivocation, the secret that is known by everybody: what is needed to regain stability into Syria is to face the state terrorism represented by the Assad regime. While the European politicians are practicing the policy of hiding behind their fingers, they only state that the Syrian opposition should not expect us to fight a “proxy war” against Russia.

Needless to say that confrontation does not happen though war only. However, it is worth mentioning that facing tyranny in Syria – especially for the EU – won't be a proxy one but an original one.

That is to say the sea separates the EU from, its neighbor, Syria did not really protect it, rather it flooded it with illegal migrants. And the dossier of refugees has caused a storm that resulted in Britain leaving the EU, freezing the membership of Hungary and destabilizing the government in Berlin. A security and economic

weakness prevailed in Italy and Greece, the two entrance countries of the EU. The Schengen agreement was about to be suspended. Whereas the Turkish ally of the Nato turned its back to the EU holding in its hand the decision to open the road of illegal migration, waving with it every now and then.

At a time when the Syrian map could fit the hard policies of Iran, Russia, Turkey and the US, in addition to others who could find a place for themselves such as Saudi Arabia, Israel and the UAE and other groups and even mafias, the European giant has turned into a charity.

Apart from participating in the US-led International Coalition to target the Islamic State group (IS), the presence of the European giant was limited – practically and mainly – to a diplomacy lacking the full the vision and driven by firefighting.

Even its financial policies of humanitarian intervention had adverse results, and added to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation by reaching the Assad regime, as mentioned by the Western media itself.

The logic of occupation

Back to the holocaust scene taking place in Ghouta, and the call of the French president to open corridors for the besieged people, there is no doubt that the observers of the scene, whether Syrians or other UN agencies and the parties of the conflict were all amazed and said: what a coincidence! That is the Russian missiles and the sectarian militias besieging Ghouta – for five years now – all have the same goal: displacement.

If we accept that the European mood – as required by interest, principles, and common sense – tends to achieve a real transition of power to reach a fundamental solution that ensures long stability, but hesitation is preventing it from forming a vision and a strategy of confrontation, especially after Russia came with all its weight.

Thus, the French stance is a humane one in appearance, procedural in reality. It aims to support the Russian approach by putting a quick end to the war to avoid the existential dangers surrounding it (surrounding France), helping in reproducing tyranny, ignoring the Western set of human rights, even the mottos of the French revolution itself – which represented an epic in the inevitability of the victory of people's will and the righteous stance of supporting it.

Ironically, almost 90 years ago, a French general, called Andrea, announced proudly the victory of his country over the Syrian rebels at the beginning of the Great



Syrian Revolution and said: the French flag is raised over the city of Sweida, but after no one was left there!

This is the logic of the occupier who does not see a crime in destruction and displacement – whether this occupier was French, Russian or American. American journalist, Charles Glass, once said describing the bestial mentality of his country during the Vietnam War: they considered destroying towns as liberation!

By reasoning, how can we describe the victory of Assad in Homs, Quseir, Yaabroud, Darayya and in other cities and towns in Syria – that were left void of everything but rubble and the smell of dead bodies – as anything but not occupation?

What classification can we give to Aleppo – being void of its population – other than being occupied by a foreign force, by the force of Russian cluster bombs and in coordination with the Security Council that issued a resolution of evacuating those who were still alive?

It was the same logic that was used by Assad to justify killing and displacing the Syrian people when he said: "we have achieved a more harmonious society"! It is the same logic too that makes the call of the French president a call for occupation, before its being an announcement of an unjustified European inability.

Priorities of Intervention

A Swedish-Kuwaiti initiative for a truce; then a lot of arguments about adopting it; then what? What if the truce was adopted and the deadly siege continued? A repeated Aleppo scenario is being mentioned, where those besieged would win their lives and Assad wins their land. So, if everyone is going to win like that, then the European giant must say its word, and this time should address to the Russian President, Vladimir Putin: the massacre must stop... Now!

If you ask anyone of those besieged in Ghouta or any Syrian refugee in the streets of Berlin, he would say: we want to liberate our land from the regime. So, the issue is not about stopping the massacre of Ghouta, it is about the giant taking the initiative and having the free will and courage to reach to the besieged without passing through Moscow.

Before tackling the features of an intervention that can be described as positive, we have to underline the following facts, based on the current scene:

- The office of the person in charge of foreign policy in the EU, Federika Moguerini, in Brussels, is now busy with the files of reconstruction and return of refugees – based on the Russian approach. This is a kind of political



absurdity and wasting opportunities; first there need to be found a road to peace that doesn't go through Sochi or Astana, in order to rehabilitate the victims and reassure the refugees.

- Turning a blind eye to the crimes committed by Assad, Russia and Iran will not help in taming the people, rather it would increase the grudge and violence within the Syrian diaspora, including those in Germany and in countries neighbouring Syria.

- As the besieged and the displaced see that the problem lies in the existence of the regime, the regime similarly sees that the problem lies in their existence. Thus, any deal with the regime to exchange the support of reconstruction for the return of refugees is a strategy that is doomed to fiasco. That is the conflict is an existential one in essence, and one about the legitimacy to reach power; it is not a disagreement about the kind of services and form of development.

- It is a grave mistake to build on the existing fragile understandings in Syria; the scene of the falling planes of all parties in one week indicates that everyone is losing so far. However, it stresses that the understandings are not stable; and this makes the scene more blurry and the prospects open to more possibilities of chaos, displacement and increased violence.

- As the age of discoveries, inventing printing and religious liberation – with the emergence Protestantism – formed the triangle of change in the Seventeenth century and contributed to the launch of the French revolution, in today's world globalization and communication technology made revolutions an inevitable thing that will result in change; this does not apply only to the Arab spring, but to all peoples that are robbed of their will and fortunes; and it will be useless fend them off with violence or counter-revolutions.

- While talking about the logic of things, lessons of history and the European role, there is a very important lesson about the difference between the logic of things and nature of things. The conclusion is that if the logic of military crackdown was able to impose a de facto situation on the short term, the nature of this crackdown is ominous of - on the long term – detonating further political instability; virtue of the injustice and tyranny inherent to the crackdown.



As for the possible intervention, we can say that who owns the capacities aforementioned in the beginning of this article, won't be out of its wits.

And whatever the capacities of the EU were, it should not be satisfied with only providing logistic support to the Geneva talks. It has to put real pressure on the two teams of negotiations, and resort to plan B:

such as waving with resorting to national tribunals, or pass the Security Council by going to the General Assembly, or extending the blacklist of those prevented from entering the EU countries, or freezing the relations with the Iran, the ally of the regime, or sending missions of monitoring and peacekeeping as stipulated by the constitution of the EU, or go towards more recognition and representation of the political opposition bodies, or refusing the siege policies by breaking it through airdrop of basic needs, or public criminalization of the use chlorine, barrel bombs and other forbidden weapons along with mobilizing the public opinion about these crimes, or any useful pressure, to the effect of removing the embarrassments of the giant silently waiting outside the halls of Russian-American understandings over "European" land.

If the parties to the conflict are obliged today to pay a heavy bill for their intervention, the EU – absent in fact, present in result – will find itself in the future obliged to pay a heavier bill from the asset of its cohesion, security, stability and sovereignty. That would be the bill of its inaction towards what it ought to do. Indeed, the policy maker can find the justifications to hide behind when the results come. But when justifications are your basis, failure will be your harvest.

